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Analysing the perceptions of generations X, Y and Z about online platforms and digital marketing activities – a review

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Abstract: Marketers are challenged to uncover new insights to hold the attention of all generations with digital marketing and advertising. This review explores the perceptions, behaviours, traits and expectations of generations X, Y, Z regarding digital marketing that is engaging, informative and influential to their consumer behaviour. We observed similarities that all generations are using WhatsApp for informal communication and e-mail for official communication. YouTube is the common online streaming platform used by all generations. GenX prefers in-store shopping over online shopping, but all generation agree to the convenience and easiness of online shopping. GenX uses social media like Facebook, Twitter, whereas GenY mostly uses Facebook, Instagram. GenZ uses Instagram, SnapChat and is slowly shifting away from Facebook. GenX are generally ignored by businesses while developing digital marketing strategies. This review will be a step towards imparting ideas to marketers to develop effective marketing strategy for all generations.

Keywords: digital marketing/advertising; online platforms; perceptions of generations X, Y, Z.

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1 Introduction

Marketing and advertising play crucial roles in the success of companies in the global competitive market. In the past couple of decades, we have witnessed a major shift in marketing budgets from traditional to online marketing. The rapid increase of smartphones, laptops and electronic gadgets with internet-connectivity enabled people spending quality time on internet. This forced the marketers and companies to invest more into digital marketing. Organisations revamped their marketing strategies by giving importance to online digital platforms. Now, online digital media like social media, e-mail marketing, etc. have become great platforms for companies to target audience to market their products and services (Anwar and El-Bassiouny, 2020).

Digital Marketing is a novel way of promoting business products and services using online digital avenues. Online digital avenues include, search engine optimisation (SEO), social media marketing (SMM), Google AdWords, e-mail marketing, micro-video marketing, paid ad campaigns, etc. The online digital avenues gave the organisations an opportunity to connect and communicate with their potential audience on a daily basis by which they could expand their reach and grow brand awareness (Anoop, 2021). As the availability of internet is becoming much cheaper, it is making more consumers move to the online world. The scope of digital marketing and online media is increasing day by day as the dynamics and mindset of Generations X, Y and Z are linked with online digital media. Digital marketing is growing at a rapid pace and if the businesses fail to use this technology to interact with the customer, their marketing strategy will fail to create an impact on their prospective audience (Ranjana and Priya, 2021). Hence, every business is using online platforms to improve their marketing activities. Be it services-based company or product based company, everyone understands the need of digital marketing avenues and are including it into their marketing strategy (Rathod, 2023).

Generation X (GenX) who are considered to be digital immigrants are showing the interest to learn and adapt to the latest technologies. Online and digital platforms have become an essential factor in their day-to-day life, be it in work, or for personal and entertainment purpose. Online and social media platforms are helping GenX to get easy access to new updates and for knowledge and reference. It helps them to keep up with Generation Y (GenY) and Generation Z (GenZ). Millennials (GenY) who are born in the era of internet, access the digital media on a daily basis to communicate and purchase brands and products from suppliers anywhere in the world (Mangold and Smith, 2012). GenY are fond of fast communication and content is very important for them. GenY consider online media as a primary and credible source of information (Howell, 2012). Digital media is getting significance among millennials in collecting information and acquiring knowledge (Valentina, et al., 2020). If GenY are technology-driven, GenZ is the first-generation to grow up with technology (Constantinos-Vasilios et al., 2017). GenZ are also known as 'screen addicts' or 'screenagers' and have uncanny talent of

mastering any online digital technology with ease (Greene, 2015). GenZ has never faced any delay in connectivity, interaction and communication. Certainly, these factors influence their behaviour, perspective in their daily life and shopping preferences (Mulyani and Andreas, 2019). The emergence of interactive social media and digital advertising has made the businesses to communicate and reach millions of GenZ with ease in an effective manner (Daniel et al., 2015). GenZ use digital platforms to listen the brand's promotional messages and the consumers' experiences (Sidra et al., 2020).

2 Framework of review

2.1 Digital marketing strategies

Digital marketing is part of marketing strategy that enables an organisation the ability to reach potential clients in an innovative way (Zimmer, 2017). With the rapid advancement of technology and easy accessibility to internet the organisation need to adopt digital marketing practices to create a holistic marketing strategy for the company (Armitage, 2015). The rapid growth of online digital media has forced many organisations to review their marketing strategies (González et al., 2017). The customers nowadays are very active in online digital platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, etc. The new trends in the market are set through them. So, the organisations need to tap this opportunity by developing a digital marketing strategy based on their business objectives (Patruti-Baltes, 2016).

Social media platforms have opened the door for two-way communication between the customers and businesses. It has also facilitated the companies to engage, interact and market new products and services to potential audience. Marketers need to be aware of this paradigm shift and need to adopt strategies and practices accordingly (Chattopadhyay, 2019). By embracing digital marketing techniques into their promotional activities, marketers could engage and reach the younger generation in a better manner (Slade, 2016). Kingsnorth (2016) stated that digital marketing and business strategy need to be integrated and grown together. He further mentioned certain digital marketing strategies, like search engine marketing (SEM), SEO, e-mail marketing, Online Paid advertising, content marketing, video marketing and affiliate marketing. Social media has a close link with word-of-mouth marketing, as nowadays anything regarding products, services; brands, events, locations, etc are reviewed and shared in the social media. The view shared and posted by people in social media can create an electronic word of mouth (e-WoM). Social media platforms can also have paid advertising platforms, by which the organisation can promote their products and services (Gaikwad and Kate, 2016).

E-mail marketing is also an effective digital marketing strategy that helps businesses to reach a large customer-base using e-mail to disseminate the company's brand, product or service messages (Piñeiro-Otero and Martínez-Rolán, 2016). It is a simple and cost-effective method to distribute promotional, commercial information and advertising materials to the potential audience. SEO is the process of increasing the visibility of the website and getting listed in search engine for prominent search keywords in the search engine result page (Patruti-Baltes, 2016). There are many online paid advertising platforms like Google AdWords, Bing Ads, etc available to drive traffic to website and to increase the brand awareness, leads and conversions (Piñeiro-Otero and Martínez-Rolán,

2016). In digital marketing, “Customer is the God and Content is the King” and so engaging, informative and useful content have to be developed by the marketers to attract the audience. The audience like more visual, graphical and video content and they spend and engage more time with such content. Companies need to channelise their marketing efforts in digital media to bring the consumer closer to the brand (Afrina et al., 2015).

2.2 Generation X or post boomers?

GenX are called as digital immigrants and are those born from 1961 to 1980. They are also referred to as Baby busters, Post Boomers, or Latchkey Generation (Gurau, 2012). GenXers are considered to be the prominent older generation who are slowly becoming active on social media and other online platforms (Madden, 2010). GenX as consumers are still in large numbers and possess high purchasing capacity. GenX are at times ignored by organisations and marketers as they are viewed as the hard-to-reach group compared to generations after them (Helmi et al., 2021). GenX have reached their matured-adulthood and engage and interact in the online media in more meaningful and purposeful manner (Global Web Index, 2018). They are considered to be more responsible in their social media usage and if their online behaviour traits are understood properly, marketers can engage with them in a better manner (Consumer Insight: Generation X, 2019).

GenXers go for branded products and are highly image-driven. They possess major consumer power in markets such as cars, appliances and children’s products. They are very sophisticated about the products they shop and hear the complete features and explanations of the product before making a purchase decision. GenX are realising that the technology is changing the world around them and are valuing the modern online technologies which has made them more active in online and social media platforms (Mahmoud et al., 2020).

GenX value the shopping experience and are more price-conscious. They have started using online platforms for buying products as it is giving them the convenience in purchase (Williams and Page, 2011). They believe more in traditional marketing avenues like newspaper ads, television ads, banners, pamphlets, etc. But, they get plenty of information about a product or service through online platforms (Dou et al., 2006). Word-of-mouth, group events and recommendations from peers play important roles in GenXers’ selection making as they often make decisions together. Social media platforms, online reviews and ratings, direct mails do influence their online purchase decision (Lissitsa and Kol, 2016). The businesses must try to appeal this generation with realistic and genuine online campaigns with which GenXers can identify with.

2.3 Millennials or Generation Y (GenY)?

Millennials or GenY are known as “digital natives” as they have grown and matured with computers, electronic gadgets and internet. They are children of Baby Boomers and early GenX. They grew up in the internet era and in media saturated world compared to their predecessors. They are people who are born between the years 1981 and 1994 (Taylor, 2014). The older members of this generation reached their adulthood around the year 2000 and this generation can be best described as the ‘first generation bathed in bits’ (Leung, 2013). They were born around the time of a qualitative leap in communication

technologies like e-mail, internet and search engine like Google (Iyer et al., 2016). Millennials are well connected with their friends, peers and acquaintances; prefer to communicate and build relationship through online. The internet-mediated communication, digital technology devices have become the prime focus of GenY life segments like education, social interactions and work-related activities (Gibson and Sodeman, 2014). They are information hungry and are in constant need of updates about what is happening new and what is released recently. They have the mentality of not wanting to miss any opportunity and have developed a trait of 'FOMO', fear of missing out. So, they always keep connected; never miss out on anything new (Benedict and Richa, 2020).

Millennials are influenced and are influencing others through online social media platforms (Michèle et al., 2014). The familiarity and easy engagement with online digital media affect their behaviour, attitude, social norms, interaction with brands and firms, their expectations and values (Smith, 2012). They use social media as valuable news source and for decision-making (Wohn and Bowe, 2016). GenY uses social media for socialising, information, leisure, to experience a sense of community and to stay connected with friends (Bolton et al., 2013). The familiarity of online digital media among GenY became the driving force for the growth of e-commerce industry (Mahmudur, 2015).

Personalisation increases the brand loyalty of GenY towards the products, brands, services, etc. (Lichy, 2012). Nuseir et al. (2023) quoted in their study that social media platforms and social media marketing as the most effective way for brands to reach the customers as it offers personalisation, customisation as well as an channel to interact with the customers. According to Adams (2015), millennials considered the quality of content, updates regarding discounts and coupons, entertainment, contests, updates on product availability in online media platform while following a brand, product or service. Video is an effective method to reach and advertise to GenY as it can communicate the message in a better way when compared with long pieces of text or Power Point. Video content can evoke emotion and make them visually cool, creative and easy to connect (Shawna, 2016). Barton et al. (2014) found the best way to reach GenY was with a cross-media and cross-channel brand presence. According Smith (2012), giving coupons and discounts are useful in persuading millennials to write a review or feedback which will lead to generating consumer-generated content to promote the company. It provides free marketing for the organisation and GenY are highly influenced by the word of mouth of their peers. Word of mouth recommendation in online has more influence on millennials, than traditional recommendations. Junk of annoying stuff in online can cause millennials to avoid online marketing altogether, so the marketers need to keep their website and online media impressive, clean and appealing (Allen et al., 2015). It is really a challenge for marketers to serve GenY better with digital communication which are engaging, informative and influential (Munsch, 2021).

2.4 *Generation Z*

GenZ are also referred to as Post-millennials, NextGen, Gen Wii or iGeneration (Twenge, 2017). GenZ are mostly the children of GenX parents, and the younger siblings of millennials. GenZ are born between 1995 and 2012, in the digital emerging era with internet access at very young age and are highly inclined towards social media (Sadaf, 2019). GenZ have smartphones, tablets, and laptops, hence technology is an integral part

of their lives. Social media help them to communicate, react, interact with their friends, peers, exchange the content created by them and also help them to create personalised pages, groups, etc. (Duffett, 2017). They use mobile devices for online purchase and hence mobile channels are becoming the most popular marketing communication platforms (Marie, 2020).

Whenever GenZ take their smartphone, they are prone to check social media applications like Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, WhatsApp, Snap Chat, etc. at least once a day. They use smartphones for online shopping also (Tong et al., 2021). Arekar et al. (2018) observed that social media has a positive influence on variety seeking buying behaviour, disagreement buying behaviour, usual buying behaviour, composite buying behaviour and impetuous buying behaviour among GenZ. GenZ are trendy, classy and social media gives them easy access to the latest trends in the field (Shamieh and Shehada, 2020). Lalwani et al. (2021) stated that marketers and companies should advertise using Instagram and YouTube to influence GenY and also consider variety, attractive offers with secure payment options. Constant chatting on customer service can build brand loyalty and positive attitude among them regarding the product or service (Aruljothi and Gaffoor, 2017). GenZ prefer social media because open communication is possible and can make purchase decision after understanding the reviews given by other people (Rue, 2018). The longer this generation spends time on online media platforms, the more likely they interact with the marketing activities and the more likely it would positively affect their buying decision, GenZ consumers mainly have four characteristics, interest on new technologies, prefer ease of use, desire to feel free and temporarily escape the realities they face (Wood 2013).

GenZ is immersed in social media and have profiles in Facebook and Twitter from their teenage itself. GenZ have shorter attention span and a constant need for entertainment. GenZ has free access to information at their fingertips than any of the prior generations. GenZ is open to new technology and adopt new features quickly (Tennant, 2016). This generation is tech savvy and brand savvy, so can rapidly distinguish unreliable brands. GenZ spend longer period of time watching online video digital channels like YouTube via mobile devices. GenZ prioritise emotional reasoning before making a purchase decision and they select the brand which reflect their personalities and represent their values (PR Newswire, 2016). This generation uses e-mail comparatively lesser than previous generations and the most used social media platform is Instagram followed by YouTube. The marketers need to develop short and interactive ads and promotion to catch the attention of GenZ (Somanna and Shyamilee, 2019). According to Singh (2014), GenZ are more device dependent, have an emotional connection with the digital world, trust more on digital content and social circles are not restricted by geography.

GenZ are a hyper-connected generation and have unlimited ways to stream information and brand alternatives (Kunja and GVRK, 2018). They are born free and have a significant influence on the household purchase decision. GenZ consumers make brand-related purchases online compared to offline. They have an important role in determining the standards of online marketing. They also have the power to re-define the production and consumption pattern (Hampton and Keys, 2016).

Vishwakarma et al. (2023) stated that social media marketing and paid marketing on YouTube platform are the most influential digital marketing strategy that influences young adult consumers whereas middle-aged adult consumers are influenced through

website marketing followed by reviews given by peers, friends and family members. An effective digital marketing strategy must focus on presenting the right and clear picture about their brand in front of the target audience. This will in turn help in developing trust, loyalty and brand satisfaction among customers (Nirmalasari et al., 2022). So it is very important to analyse the perception and consumption patterns of Generations X, Y and Z towards online platforms and digital marketing activities.

3 Methodology

The study is descriptive in nature and is done based on the secondary data obtained from the previous studies, articles and books in this area.

3.1 Research problem

In this era of easy access to internet and rapid digitalisation, customers spend quality time online in various platforms. It is a challenge for marketers to understand the perception of online media marketing among GenX, GenY and GenZ. Only after understanding the perceptions of the consumers towards online media marketing, an organisation can develop digital marketing strategies that engage and capture the attention of GenX, Y and Z.

3.2 Research questions

Primary research question

How can an effective digital marketing strategy be developed based on the perceptions of generations X, Y and Z cohorts on digital marketing communication and advertising?

Secondary research questions

- 1 What are the characteristics of digital marketing communication and advertising that will hold the attention of generations X, Y and Z, and influence their consumer behaviour?
- 2 Are there any notable differences in the perceptions of generations X, Y and Z cohorts in terms of digital marketing communication and advertising that can help marketer to develop an effective marketing strategy?

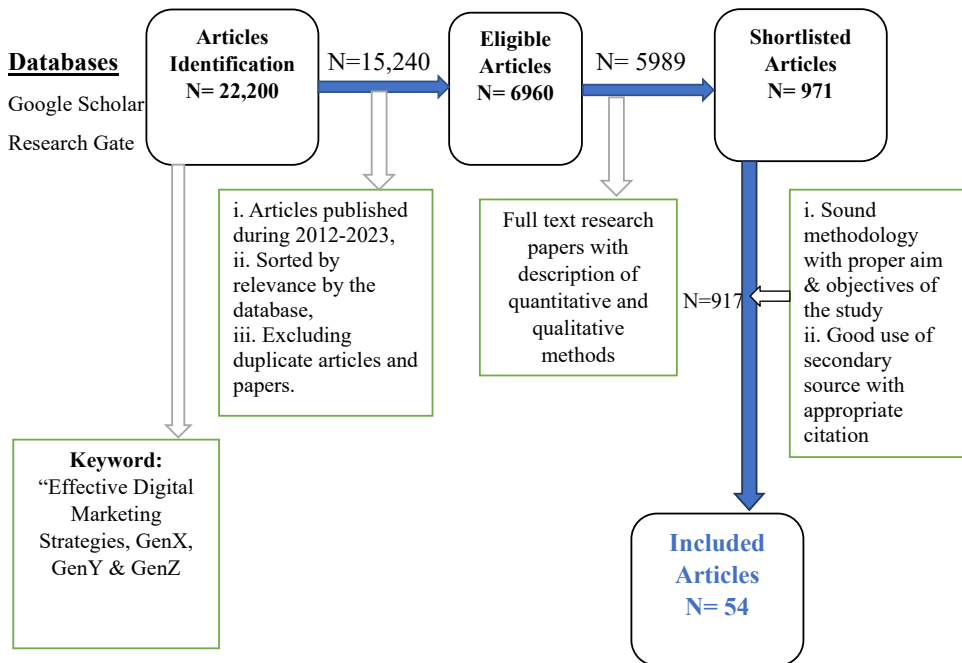
3.3 Objectives

- 1 To understand the perceptions of generations X, Y and Z cohorts on digital marketing communication and advertising through reviewing the relevant literature,
- 2 To identify the differences in the perceptions of generations X, Y and Z customers on digital marketing concepts, and
- 3 To find out the gap in the researches on the perceptions of these three generations on digital marketing communication and advertising based on which an effective digital marketing strategy can be developed.

Literature Survey of the previous studies on digital marketing strategies for Generations X, Y and Z was performed. For selecting the articles, the researcher searched Google Scholar and Research Gate related to digital marketing strategies for Generations X, Y and Z. PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) flowchart endorsed by the Cochrane Collaboration (Prayag et al., 2018; Pati and Lorrusso, 2018) was adopted in order to do the literature review systematically. The literature review articles were selected by following a systematic 4-step procedure:

- 1 *Identification*: This stage includes searching for articles on secondary sources. Searched articles in Google Scholar and Research Gate with Keywords: “Effective Digital Marketing Strategies, GenX, GenY and GenZ” in titles, keywords or abstracts.
- 2 *Screening*: The papers and articles were screened based on three criteria
 - a articles published during 2012 – 2023 were only considered
 - b with help of database the articles were sorted by relevance
 - c excluded duplicates, case studies, reports and company surveys.
- 3 *Eligibility*: The criteria for eligible articles and papers were that it must have full text research paper and with description of quantitative or qualitative methods.
- 4 *Included*: The papers and articles were included finally based on two criteria
 - a sound methodology with proper aim and objectives of the study
 - b good use of secondary source with appropriate citation.

Figure 1 PRISMA diagram of systematic literature review (see online version for colours)



As a result of four stages filtering process, articles planned to be reviewed for literature survey has been reduced to 54 articles.

4 Results

The studies from the selected 54 articles have been mentioned in the literature review. The results are presented in tabular form by including only selected pertinent studies: digital marketing and online platforms among GenX (Table 1), digital marketing and online platforms among GenY (Table 2), digital marketing and online platforms among GenZ (Table 3).

5 Findings

5.1 Generation X

- Though GenX are digital immigrants, online platforms and online shopping have undeniable impact on them. They are not familiar with latest technologies like later generations and hence they are influenced more by traditional marketing than online marketing.
- Mobile and other modern technologies enable them to communicate better with friends, families, peers and businesses. They are slowly getting active in social media platforms especially in Facebook and WhatsApp. They are very much price and brand conscious while selecting a product or service.
- GenX, though prefer buying products through retail stores, have started trying out online shopping, as it provides convenience of purchasing the products and also provide 24 × 7 access.
- GenX have concerns about the online transactions and personal data privacy issue and companies must solve this concern by improving privacy and security systems.
- Traditional marketing methods like television and newspaper ads still create an impression on them. Word of mouth and opinions about products and services given by their friends, families, and peers are considered by them while making a purchase online.
- Reviews and ratings in the website have negligible influence on them, but still do research and look into it. GenX are considered to be the most loyal customer among the three generations and they do not shift their brands and products frequently like GenY and GenZ.
- GenX have started accepting online platforms and e-commerce sites, even though they were not born and brought up in the internet and modern technology era.
- GenX are building up their knowledge on the latest technologies in online and e-commerce platforms and the value of online purchase is high among them as they have the purchase power.

Table 1 Digital marketing and online platforms among GenX

<i>Author and year</i>	<i>Title of the study</i>	<i>Purpose/objective</i>	<i>Main findings</i>
Helmi et al. (2021)	Discovering the values of generation X and millennial consumers in Indonesia	To identify the sets of values representing the underlying values and the differences between GenX and Millennial consumers in Indonesia and to develop marketing strategies based on these values.	It was discovered that for GenX, companies need to deliver a product positioning and marketing mix which reflects values of Achievement, Family enjoyment and Social relationship. Social recognition and Self-pleasing is extremely important when marketing to Millennials. Businesses must look into generation preferences, before developing and marketing a product.
Vinoth and Balaji (2018)	GenX attitude towards online shopping – an empirical study	To determine 1 the relationship between Payment risk and attitude of GenX 2 the association between purchase decision and shopping behaviour 3 the relationship between customer perception and services offered by online stores.	GenX consumers feel online shopping more convenient and quicker over retail stores as purchases can be made 24x7. Concerns regarding customers' information are arising and online store should ensure that it is secured during every transaction. Online presence and shopping of GenX in will continue to grow as they are getting familiar with new technology and connectivity is increasing and will reflect on the online purchasing of this generation.
Panjaitan et al. (2018)	Examining GenX experiences on using ecommerce: integrating the technology acceptance model and perceived risks	To understand GenX usage of e-commerce platforms and to investigate their perceptions and experiences towards e-commerce platforms based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and perceived risks.	GenX consumers have started adopting and are using e-commerce sites even though they were born and brought up without the Internet and modern technology. The perceived high risks include product risks, privacy and security risks, financial risks, time risks and delivery risks. The e-commerce providers and the sellers need to provide assurance in this aspect.
Tanusree and Janarthanan (2017)	Exploratory tendencies in consumer behavior in online buying across GenX, Gen Y and baby boomers	To explore the multidimensionality behaviour tendencies across seven dimensions, namely, repetitive behaviour proneness, innovativeness, exploration through shopping information seeking, brand switching risk taking, and interpersonal communication among generations.	The age of consumer has a strong and significant association with nature of buying behaviour. GenX exhibits high repetitive behaviour proneness, exploration through shopping information seeking and they depend on third-party articles, blogs and, reviews. Baby boomers are high on risk taking and interpersonal communication. GenX and baby boomers are influenced by tradeshows. GenY and baby boomers are likely to buy products which match their values and beliefs. GenY is more innovative compared to other generations.

Table 1 Digital marketing and online platforms among GenX (continued)

<i>Author and year</i>	<i>Title of the study</i>	<i>Purpose/objective</i>	<i>Main findings</i>
Yoga and Triami (2021)	The online shopping behavior of Indonesian generation X toward e-commerce	To examine the acceptance and use of e-commerce among Generation X, the digital immigrants using the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2)	GenX believes that using e-commerce has helped to achieve their goals and feel pleasure in doing online shopping. IT infrastructure and knowledge of e-commerce among GenX are still relatively low and companies need to build e-commerce platforms with user-friendly features and security systems to decrease the level of risk.
Slootweg and Rowson (2018)	My generation: a review of marketing strategies on different age groups	To study the influence of marketing strategies on the Baby Boomers, GenX and GenY and how a specific generation can be influenced in order to gain more sales in the hotel sector.	All generations have a strong affinity towards online marketing and are more influenced by online marketing campaigns than traditional marketing. Major differences b/w the generations were that GenX and GenY are more influenced by online marketing. GenX and Y are more into social and online media.
Dan-Cristian et al. (2018)	Generation X vs. millennials communication behavior on social media when purchasing food vs. tourist services	To determine the extent to which social media communication influences GenXers' and Millennials' preference for food products versus tourist services	GenX and Millennials choose food products and tourist services based on the recommendations and information presented on social media. GenX and GenY interact with company's official pages and they act as strong customer support and for acquiring new information about the products or services. GenX and GenY compare goods and services in online before buying.
Chatchapat and Tiwa (2022)	Technology acceptance and digital marketing communication affecting decision to purchase shoes through online channels of generation X customers in Bangkok	The main aim of the research is to study the digital marketing communication affecting decision to purchase shoes through online channels of generation X customers in Bangkok.	The study found out that the digital marketing activities and social media platforms had a positive effect on generation X customers in Bangkok to take purchase decision of buying shoes through online channels. They find online channels easy and convenient to use. They still feel the risk of privacy and losing the feel of touch while purchasing products through online channel.

Table 2 Digital marketing and online platforms among GenY

<i>Author and year</i>	<i>Title of the study</i>	<i>Purpose/objective</i>	<i>Main findings</i>
Haggah and Ying (2019)	How do social media marketing activities influence customer equity and purchase intention?	To explore the influence of social media marketing activities on customer equity and how it drives the intention of GenY in the context of hotel industry.	Social media marketing campaigns have positively affected customer equity in hotel industry. Brand equity and relationship equity have positive impact on customer's purchase intention.
Molika (2019)	Exploring the factors influencing millennials intention- to-purchase of Facebook ads in Bangladesh.	To check the effect of Facebook ads on purchase intention of fashion accessories, event management and photography among Bangladeshi millennials.	Facebook has a great significance and business need to give importance in better customer engagement and give rewards to influencer customers.
Taanika and Bhawna (2019)	Empirical study on perceived value and attitude of millennials towards social media ads: a structural equation modeling approach.	To understand the relationship between the identified predictors as entertainment, irritation, informativeness, credibility, incentives and personalisation on social media advertising value.	There is a positive relationship b/w perceived value of social media advertising and attitude towards social media advertising. It reinforces the relationships of informativeness, entertainment irritation with social media advertising value. Other important predicting advertising value variables are credibility personalisation and incentives.
Duffett (2015)	The influence of Facebook advertising on cognitive attitudes amid Generation Y	To understand whether the largest social networking medium FB's marketing communications effectively reach the young adults in South Africa? What influence it has on millennials' cognitive attitudes in their buying behaviour?	FB advertising is a marketing communication tool which has favorable effect on the awareness and knowledge hierarchy-of-effects model levels amongst GenY in South Africa. FB advertising undoubtedly created awareness among the GenY cohort in SA. Ads on the SNS with good design, color, tagline and more stimulating content did catch GenY attention.
Kanyawee and Anon (2021)	How to convert millennial consumers to brand evangelists through social media micro-influencers?	To investigate how brand engagement and brand love has potential impact on explaining how social media micro-influencers convert millennial consumers to brand evangelists.	Characteristics of social media micro-influencers like authenticity, the meaning of the influencer, specific content and secret sharing have a significant impact on brand engagement and brand love. This mediated the pathway from social media micro-influencer characteristics to brand evangelism.

Table 2 Digital marketing and online platforms among GenY (continued)

<i>Author and year</i>	<i>Title of the study</i>	<i>Purpose/objective</i>	<i>Main findings</i>
Ozuem et al. (2021)	Determinants of online brand communities' and millennials' characteristics: a social influence perspective	To develop a conceptual framework that links a holistic set of online brand communities' characteristics like brand sentiment, identification with source, affirmative experience, and conspicuous effect to millennial consumers' perceptions in the fashion sector.	The four categories of customer engagement in online brand communities among millennials - judgementalists, sugarcoaters, bias situators and rationalisers respond differently within communities. The study also presents a model illustrating four thematic categories: brand sentiment, identification with source, affirmative experience and conspicuous effect. For each group, it is important to understand the characteristics that impact their brand sentiment reflected through their contribution.
Roopa et al. (2022)	Millennials and digitalization: online shopping behavior	To analyse the impact of social media on online purchase behaviour of millennials and the factors those influence the online shopping of them.	The major factors that lead to online purchase include need, information, discounts, consumer reviews, confidence, risk level, risk avoidance intention and perception. Social media is most effective promotional tool followed by Newspaper, Bill boards, Television among Gen Y. YouTube is the most commonly used online-streaming platform.
Valentina et al. (2020)	Influencers as a segment of digital marketing communication – generation Y attitudes	1 To provide insights into marketing communication changes induced by digital transformation and social media use among Gen Y and examine the role and significance of prominent social media influencers in creating contemporary marketing communication among Gen Y members in Serbia.	Instagram and FB are the most used social media networking sites followed by YouTube, Twitter, WhatsApp and LinkedIn. The consumption of traditional media such as press and TV are declining. Females are more interested in using social media. Gen Y in Serbia generally have a negative opinion on social media influencers. The influencers' reliability is based on the good taste of their recommendations, providing genuine and useful content rather than commercial. Gen Y consider content created by influencers less reliable as they are paid sponsors of companies or brands.

Table 3 Digital marketing and online platforms among GenZ

<i>Author and year</i>	<i>Title of the study</i>	<i>Purpose/objective</i>	<i>Main findings</i>
Navya et al. (2020)	Influence of social media marketing on the purchase intention of GenZ	To study the GenZ preference towards social media marketing and traditional marketing in the context of brand awareness, product perception, brand loyalty, customer-business interaction and purchase intention.	Social media ads are important advertising platforms in building relation, awareness, loyalty, perception, and purchase intention among GenZ. GenZ prefer social media ads more compared to traditional advertising methods.
Packiaraj et al. (2019)	Consumer decision-making style of GenZ: a generational cohort analysis	Exploratory study is conducted to explore the shopping orientation and consumer decision-making style of GenZ using the generational cohort theory (GCT) to understand how GenZ approaches the online shopping	By doing cluster analysis (K-means) online shopping orientation factors four segments were identified: (a) Economic-quality seekers, (b) Convenience shoppers, (c) Deal hunting-convenience seekers and (d) Brand and quality conscious shoppers. The value consciousness and convenience driven are the dominant shopping orientations that drive the GenZ consumers.
Asma et al. (2020)	Digital marketing strategies: effectiveness on generation Z	To explore various dimensions of digital marketing strategies with reference to GenZ through a comprehensive literature survey and to construct a valid scale for measuring the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies on GenZ.	Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to establish the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies on GenZ. Secondly, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), was done to confirm the factors coined through EFA. The four dimensions identified are Personalised Marketing, Social Media Marketing, Push Notification Marketing and Content Marketing.
Sidra et al. (2020)	Can narrative advertisement and eWOM influence generation Z purchase intentions?	To investigate how GenZ consumers are affected by the two information sources like, the brands via narrative advertising, and peer consumers through electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM).	Narrative advertising has strong effects on GenZ purchase intentions as compared to eWOM. Narrative ads activate GenZ consumers' use of persuasion knowledge, and it positively influences the purchase intention, brand memory and loyalty. Deploying eWOM and narrative ads help to design the marketing strategies for GenZ.
Lalwani et al. (2021)	The influence of social media on buying behavior of generation – Z	To identify the factors influencing purchase behaviour of GenZ when looking for products online on websites and on social media, and to find out the most preferred social media platform among them.	Instagram is the most frequently used social media platform and the price plays a major factor while considering online product purchase. Online ads have influence more on GenZ males compared to female in purchase behaviour. YouTube and Instagram are preferred social media websites over FB.
Semona (2021)	The influence of electronic word-of-mouth adoption on brand love amongst Gen Z consumers	To investigate the impact of eWOM adoption on brand love among GenZ consumers in South Africa.	Argument quality had a strong, positive influence on information usefulness on eWOM adoption. Brand love is determined if the brands made the respondents feel good, awesome and happy. The eWOM adoption has a weak effect on South African GenZ consumers even if they loved the brands.

Table 3 Digital marketing and online platforms among GenZ (continued)

<i>Author and year</i>	<i>Title of the study</i>	<i>Purpose/objective</i>	<i>Main findings</i>
Hoai and Cong (2020)	The reaction of Vietnam's generation Z to online TV advertising	To examine the reaction of the GenZ Vietnam consumers on online TV advertising and to explore the elements of online TV ads that has a positive influence and factors that have negative effect on their consumption decisions.	Six factors that influence the reactions of GenZ consumers are information, entertainment, irritation, credibility, interaction and advertising value. Due to the generational characteristics and social media influence most of the GenZ consumers in Vietnam have a positive thinking towards online TV advertising and appreciate this form of advertising.
Duffett (2020)	The YouTube marketing communication effect on cognitive, affective and behavioral attitudes among generation Z consumers	To study the effect of YouTube marketing communication on the traditional and non-traditional attitudinal associations of response hierarchy models.	Structural equation modelling was used to consider the hypothesised attitudinal associations. The research determined that YouTube marketing communication has a positive influence on the hypothesised attitudinal associations, and young consumers who used YouTube for fewer years, logged on more frequently, spent shorter time on the platform, viewed higher numbers of commercials. White population group exhibited the most positive attitudinal responses.
Mulyani and Andreas (2019)	Understanding digital consumer: generation Z online shopping preferences	To recognise the preferences of GenZ in online shopping and the platforms they use more often for shopping online.	High visual-person involvement with images and videos, clear information and details, ease of using are things GenZ look for in online shopping. Social media platforms influence their online purchase decision, but also appreciated the e-commerce platforms because of its convenience.
Nynoshka (2022)	Analysis of digital marketing strategies that Gen Z react to most positively and its implications for brands	The main objective of the study was to identify which of the popular digital marketing strategies due GenZ react positively and which strategies they find annoying.	The usage of Facebook among Gen Z is reducing, they use Facebook just for wider connections and they don't spend too much time on it. Facebook is the least liked app for shopping, or marketing communications. They prefer private circles where they can freely express like Instagram and Snapchat. Instagram lets them build their ideal personal brand while Snapchat lets them be their true selves. Instagram and YouTube prove to be strong platforms for Gen Z.

- The businesses and marketers are generally ignoring or overlooking GenX at the time of marketing. GenX also must be considered while promoting a product or service as they are an attractive population with huge purchase power.

5.2 Generation Y

- GenY mostly use Facebook, Instagram followed by YouTube, Twitter, WhatsApp and LinkedIn.
- They are considered to be the generation who started the social media trend and laid the pathway for the usage of social media platforms for later generations.
- GenY are considered to be the digital natives as they grew up during the growth of technologies like computer, internet and mobile phones.
- They are familiar with latest technologies and are very much active in online platforms. They were exposed to marketing campaigns at a very young age. They are the growing segment, who are having great purchasing power after GenX and they started the online shopping trend in the world.
- They always prefer two-way communication, between customers and businesses which is provided by social media. So, ads on social media have an influence on them.
- Word of mouth and recommendations given by the friends, families and peers, reviews and ratings have influence on their purchase decisions.
- They prefer online shopping over in-store shopping, as it is easier and convenient to buy the product and are also attracted by the coupons, offers, discounts and cash-back offers.
- They are attracted to websites which are interactive, with proper graphics and layout with authenticity and credible content. Personalisation and customisation are also preferred by them.
- GenY are irritated by the pop-up ads, repetitive ads and ads which appear in between watching a video. The consumption of traditional media platforms like press and television is declining among them.
- Influencers in social media platforms do create an impact on them by creating brand awareness and purchase decision as well.

5.3 Generation Z

- GenZ consumers spend long time in online and social media platforms and these platforms are the right places where the marketers and businesses can reach and engage with them.
- GenZers are emerging as the largest consumer segment in the world and prefer online platforms over traditional platforms.
- They have an important role to play in revolutionising and improving the online shopping and e-commerce platforms and are following the footsteps of GenY.

- GenZ are very much active in social media platforms and have changed the dynamics of social media as a whole. YouTube, Instagram, Snap Chat and Facebook dominate the social media habits of GenZ. They are slowly shifting away from Facebook, and prefer new social media platforms like Instagram.
- Word of Mouth (WoM) and peer interactions have an influence on the purchase decision of GenZ and they value e-WoM as well. They do research in the online and keenly read the reviews and ratings given by others on online sites.
- GenZ mostly prefer e-retailers over in-store retailers, as they see online shopping convenient and feel that more offers and discounts are provided in online.
- GenZ are considered to be less brand loyal when compared to prior generations and they always prefer customised and personalised products and services. They also compare the products available in online shopping portals before making the final purchase decision.
- The marketing strategies that target GenZ must be customised. Social media and online platforms tend to influence their buying behaviour, their preference, their perception and habit.
- Traditional marketing avenues like television ads still have influence on them compared to other traditional methods. Positive storytelling, visually appealing images and videos, clear information and personalisation are liked by GenZ.
- Goal hindrance, concerns of privacy, junk and advertising mess creates a negative perception towards online ads among GenZ and they use e-mail comparatively less and e-mail marketing is considered by them as outdated.

6 Limitations and scope for further studies

- For this study research articles and papers from Google Scholar and Research Gate database were only referred. Other databases need to be referred to get a wide range of insights regarding this area.
- Generations can never be called as homogenous group as difference occur within the group; this study did not focus much on it as well.
- In future, studies should concentrate on comparing inter-generational cohorts and intra-generational cohorts to get broader level of understanding of the different generational groups.
- As every generation have different expectations, behaviours and experiences which influence their online usage and purchase behaviour, the companies need to adopt multi-generational marketing strategy.
- Multigenerational marketing is the latest trend and more studies need to be done in future in this field.

7 Conclusions

Digital media and advertisements have become an inherent part of the decision-making process of all generations. The perceptions of various generation cohorts regarding digital media and advertisements differ. A thorough understanding of the perceptions of all generations will help in the development of an effective digital marketing strategy. Hence, marketers have to spend time to study the perceptions of the 3 major generations X, Y and Z to develop well-defined plan in investing in digital marketing. GenX still believe in traditional media over online platforms, but are showing interest to keep up with latest trends. They are also embracing the online and social media platforms, as they realise it as the future. GenX, who still possess sizeable purchasing power, can never be ignored by marketers and businesses while drafting a marketing plan. GenY were the first generation who embraced the social media and online platforms and they made the foundation for later generations. GenZ who is the dominant consumer group, have changed the dynamics of online marketing and social media. As they are young, energetic with short attention span and always looking for change has become difficult for brands and businesses to capture their attention. GenZ is the consumer group who always look out for change and is very active on the online and social media platforms compared to other generations. Marketers and businesses can target them easily through online, but grabbing their attention and converting them into customers still remains a challenge. Each generational cohort has different behaviour, habits and traits and it is very important to have digital marketing strategies which influence, attract and engage all of them. So, it is definitely worthwhile to analyse and understand the perception of Online Marketing Media among GenX, GenY and GenZ to develop an engaging digital marketing strategy for them.

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